



Consular Newsletter
Consulate General of the United States
Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
March–April 2011

U.S. Citizen Registration: Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)

Have you registered? The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) is a free service provided by the U.S. Government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to, or living in a foreign country. STEP allows you to enter information about your upcoming trip abroad so that the Department of State can better assist in an emergency. STEP also allows Americans residing abroad to get routine information from the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. Following is the link to registration in STEP:

<https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>

New York to Hold a Special Election for Congress – May 24, 2011

On Tuesday, May 24, 2011, New York will hold a special election for the 26th Congressional District, to fill the seat vacated by Representative Christopher J. Lee. The 26th Congressional District includes the following counties: Erie, Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Niagara, Orleans, and Wyoming. To determine if your legal residence is in the 26th Congressional District, go to: <http://fvap.gov/reference/about-elect-officials/index.html>, and then on to: “United States House of Representatives.”

Register to Vote and Request Your Ballot Now! To vote in this election you must register by submitting a post-marked Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) by April 29, 2011. New York also allows you to email or fax the FPCA, but you still must mail it as well to insure you meet the signature requirements. Your FPCA must be received by your local New York Board of Elections Office by May 4, 2011. **Go to FVAP.gov and get started! It only takes a few minutes!** Alternately you may obtain an FPCA from your unit or installation voting assistance officer and at U.S. embassies and consulates worldwide; but you must follow the New York instructions given at FVAP.gov. Indicate on the FPCA how you would like to receive your absentee ballot, by mail, email, or fax. You **will not** receive a ballot automatically, even if you voted in the November 2, 2010 general election. If you are registering in person at one of the seven county board of elections offices, the deadline to register is May 13, 2011. If you are already registered to vote, the deadline for submitting an FPCA to request a ballot is May 17, 2011, or 7 days before the election.

Send the FPCA by Email, Fax or Mail: If you choose to **email** your FPCA, you should send the form to the email address listed below for the correct county office where you reside in the 26th Congressional District. If you choose to **fax** your FPCA, fax the form to the fax number listed below for the correct county office where you reside. You may also use the DoD Electronic Transmission Service to fax your FPCA toll-free. To use the Electronic Transmission Service, use the cover sheet available in the Voting Assistance Guide, or at FVAP.gov, and fax to: (703)-693-5527, DSN 223-5527, or toll-free from the U.S., Canada, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands to 1-800-368-8683. International toll-free numbers can be found at FVAP.gov. Voter Alert Telephone: 703-588-1584 E-mail: vote@fvap.gov

Submit your FPCA to the District 26 election office in which you reside:

Erie County Board of Elections

134 W. Eagle Street
Buffalo, NY 14202-3896
urbanskp@erie.gov
(716)-858-4992

Genesee County Board of Elections
15 Main Street
PO Box 284
Batavia, NY 14021
dcassidy@co.genesee.ny.us
(585) 344-8562

Livingston County Board of Elections
6 Court Street, Room 104
Genese, NY 14454-1043
nleven@co.livingston.ny.us
(585) 243-7015

Monroe County Board of Elections
39 Main Street West
Rochester, NY 14614-1408
rmurray@monroecounty.gov
(585) 753-1511

Niagara County Board of Elections
111 Main Street, Suite 100
Lockport, NY 14094-3718
maryanne.casamento@niagaracounty.com
(716) 438-4054

Orleans County Board of Elections
County Office Building
14016 Route 31
Albion, NY 14411-9382
dpiedimonte@orleansny.com
(585) 589-2771

Wyoming County Board of Elections
4 Perry Avenue
Warsaw, NY 14569-1220
wlsimpson@ftrontiernet.net
(585) 786-8843

Receive Your Ballot : Ballots will be mailed and emailed to you starting on April 8, 2011.

Vote Your Ballot: Your voted ballot must be **postmarked by May 23, 2011**, and must be **received by June 6, 2011**, in order to be counted. You must return your voted ballot and signed affidavit by regular mail, or you can send it via a licensed motor carrier such as Federal Express, UPS or DSL. Civilians residing outside the U.S.: Contact your closest U.S. Embassy or consulate for specific instructions on how voted ballots, with proper domestic postage attached, can be returned to the United States from any U.S. embassy or consulate. To locate your nearest U.S. embassy or consulate, visit <http://www.usembassy.gov/>. If a voter is concerned about not receiving their ballot in time to vote, they may use the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB, SF-186). The FWAB instructions are available at www.FVAP.gov. The FWAB is also available in embassies and consulates and military installations around the world.

To check the status of your absentee ballot visit:
<https://newyork.overseasvotefoundation.org/overseas/home.htm>

Additional Information: State specific information on precincts, candidates, elections, and voting is available at the New York state board of elections website, <http://www.elections.state.ny.us/>.

FVAP -- Entries for Poster and Slogan Contest – Open to All

For the first time ever, the Federal Voting Assistance Program is opening its biennial voting poster and slogan contests to all U.S. citizens worldwide using Challenge.gov to facilitate the process.

The FVAP Slogan Contest challenge asks for slogan ideas that inspire members of the military, their families and U.S. Citizens residing overseas to start or continue to participate in elections while away from home and can be found at FVAP.gov or <http://challenge.gov/DoD/115-absentee-voting-slogan-contest>.

The FVAP Poster Contest seeks artwork illustrating what it means to be an American voter anywhere in the world. The FVAP Poster Contest details are located at FVAP.gov or <http://challenge.gov/DoD/116-absentee-voting-poster-contest>.

The winner for each contest and a guest will receive a trip to our nation's capital to participate in special events and tours. Runners-up will not only feel the satisfaction of knowing that their slogan or artwork is helping to improve voter awareness and participation, but will also receive a certificate of recognition from the Department for their contribution to this important endeavor.

There is no limit to the number of entries an individual may submit for either contest. All entries must be received by **April 8, 2011**. All submissions must include your full name, branch of service (if military), mailing address, daytime telephone number, fax number and e-mail address (if applicable). Defense Human Resource Activity personnel and their immediate family members are not eligible to participate in these contests.

Challenge.gov is administered by the [U.S. General Services Administration](#) (GSA) in partnership with [ChallengePost](#). The site brings together the best talents and ideas of the American public to make the government's efforts the very best they can be.

IRS Free File

U.S. citizens and resident aliens living outside the United States may use IRS Free File to prepare and electronically file their federal tax returns, according to the Internal Revenue Service.

IRS Free File is brand-name software that does the hard work for taxpayers. It's offered exclusively at IRS.gov, through a partnership with the tax software industry.

To be eligible, taxpayers' adjusted gross income in 2010 must be \$58,000 or less. Some overseas taxpayers may exclude \$91,500 of their 2010 foreign earnings, which would make more people eligible for IRS Free File.

Free File software generally asks questions, taxpayers supply the answers. The software completes the proper tax forms, does the math and allows for free electronic filing through IRS e-file. By filing electronically, taxpayers due refunds and who have U.S. bank accounts can opt for direct deposit and get their refunds in as few as 10 days.

To get started with IRS Free File, go to www.irs.gov/freefile and select "Pick a Free File Company."

The filing season is now in full swing. Most forms and publications are now available on www.irs.gov.

Reminder: The filing deadline this year is extended to April 18, 2011.

Taxpayers will have until Monday, April 18 to file their 2010 tax returns and pay any tax due because Emancipation Day, a holiday observed in the District of Columbia, falls this year on Friday, April 15. By law, District of Columbia holidays impact tax deadlines in the same way that federal holidays do; therefore, all taxpayers will have three extra days to file this year. Taxpayers requesting an extension will have until Oct. 17 to file their 2010 tax returns. See <http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=233910,00.html> for complete details.

If you reside overseas, or are in the military on duty outside the U.S., you are allowed an automatic 2-month extension to file your return until June 15. However, any tax due must be paid by the original return due date (April 18 this year only) to avoid interest charges.

If you are unable to file your return by the due date, you can request an additional extension to October 17 by filing Form 4868 before the return due date. However, any payments made after June 15 would be subject to both interest charges and failure to pay penalties.

Where to File: If you are a U.S. citizen or resident alien (Green Card Holder), and you live in a foreign country or you are a non resident alien, mail your U.S. tax return to:

Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service Center
Austin, TX 73301-0215

Estimated tax payments should be mailed with form 1040-ES to:

Internal Revenue Service
P.O. Box 660406
Dallas, TX 75266-0406
USA

Personal Emergency Plans and “To Go” KIT

Flooding caused by heavy rains in recent months caused many people to be unable to reach home on one or two occasions. At those times, some people were forced to unexpectedly spend the night in offices, schools or other locations without any personal item. Family members should make and discuss contingency plans about where to go, who to contact, etc., to ensure all family members are prepared for any unexpected situation. Also, you may wish to consider putting together an emergency “to go” kit to keep in the car, the office, or at school to sustain you for overnight or for several days. While the list below is not all inclusive, it is a guide for you to use and personalize for your own circumstances. A general rule of thumb is – what items do I absolutely have to have with me if I cannot get home:

- ❖ Personal medications. Make sure you have enough prescription medication to last several days. Non prescription medications that you might want to include are: Imodium, Pepto-Bismol; Aspirin, Motrin or Tylenol; Vitamins
- ❖ Eye glasses/ contact lens solution
- ❖ Cash
- ❖ Personal credit cards
- ❖ Climate appropriate clothing for at least three days (Umbrella, rain/winter coat/shoes)

- ❖ Food items/snacks
 - o Bottled water
 - o Any dietary requirements you might have
 - o Energy bars
 - o Canned or freeze-dried food
 - o Manual can opener; bottle opener, cork screw
- ❖ Toiletries kit
 - o Razor
 - o Soap/shampoo/deodorant
 - o Roll of toilet paper or small Kleenex tissue packets
 - o Hand cleaning packets
 - o Feminine hygiene products
- ❖ Flashlight, batteries and charger
- ❖ First aid kit (Band-Aids, antiseptic, Insect Repellent, Anti-Itch Medication, Sun Block, etc.)
- ❖ Telephone charger
- ❖ Contact numbers for family/friends/emergency services.

Recent Travel Warnings/Public Announcements:

Saudi Arabia Country Information Sheet – updated October 23, 2009 –
http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1012.html

Travel Warning – Saudi Arabia – issued December 23, 2010 –
http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_932.html

Worldwide Caution – issued January 31, 2011 –
http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_4787.html

Upcoming Consulate Holiday Closures:

May 28 – U.S. Memorial Day

Useful Contacts/Links:

U.S. Consulate Jeddah: <http://jeddah.usconsulate.gov/>

American Citizens Services, Jeddah: email- JeddahACS@state.gov

Warden Messages: <http://riyadh.usembassy.gov/service/advisories-for-americans-in-ksa/warden-messages.html>

Registration: <https://travelregistration.state.gov>

Useful Information: <http://travel.state.gov>

U.S. Consulate Jeddah

American Citizens Services Section

Public Service Hours: Sat/Mon/Tues/Wed – 1–3 pm (except US and Saudi holidays)

Tele: 966/2/667-0080, ext. 4610

Fax: 966/2/669-3078 or 3098

*After hours **Emergency:** 966/2/667-0080 ext. 0*